

## DWELLING STRUCTURE CLASSIFICATION (DSC)

### Introduction

The *Dwelling Structure Classification* (DSC) is a classification recently developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to provide a standard classification of the different types of dwelling structures (houses, flats, townhouses, etc.). The DSC has been used in the 1990 *Survey of Income and Housing Costs and Amenities* and the 1991 *Census of Population and Housing*. It will be implemented across all major collections of housing data in the ABS. The DSC has the same overall scope as the classification used in previous Censuses and household surveys but provides more categories than previously to reflect the current need to provide separate details on medium and high density housing.

The classification also is comparable to the *Functional Classification of Buildings* (BLD) as far as the residential building component is concerned. The BLD has been expanded to incorporate the same level of detail as the DSC where appropriate. The BLD, which also covers non-residential buildings, is used in the ABS Building Approvals and the Building Activity Survey collections. Implementation of the classification in the Building collections has commenced and is expected to be complete within the next year or so.

The DSC divides dwellings into seven major categories according to the structure of the building that contains the dwelling. Two of these categories are further sub-divided according to the number of storeys. A "building" is defined as a permanent structure with a roof and doors, designed to house people, plant, machinery, vehicles, goods or livestock. A "storey" is a level on which people live or cars are garaged. The number of storeys is the number of floors above ground which are directly on top of each other.

For completeness, and particularly for Population Census purposes, the classification provides for some categories of dwellings which are not buildings, such as caravans, houseboats, improvised houses, etc.

For the DSC a "dwelling" in a building is defined as a suite of rooms which are self-contained and intended for

long term residential use. To be self-contained the suite of rooms must possess cooking and bathing facilities as building fixtures. This is consistent with the *Functional Classification of Buildings* and what is commonly thought of as a dwelling. This is also consistent with the concept of a dwelling in the Censuses of Population and Housing and the Household surveys. However, the Census collects data in respect of "households" (a group of people who usually reside and eat together) and defines an "occupied dwelling" as the premises occupied by a household on Census night. Therefore, the total number of occupied dwellings in an area, as measured by the Census, may be greater than the known number of occupied dwelling structures because more than one household can occupy one dwelling structure.

### Dwelling Structure Classification (DSC)

The classification is set out below with definitions given beneath each of the seven categories.

#### • *Separate house*

These are houses separated from other houses (or other buildings or structures) by space to allow access on all sides (at least 1/2 a metre). This category also includes houses which have an attached flat (e.g. a granny flat). The attached flat will be included in the "Flats" category below.

#### • *Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse, etc. with:*

- 1 storey; or
- 2 or more storeys.

This category covers dwellings with their own private grounds and no dwelling above or below. A key feature of these dwellings is that they are either attached in some structural way to one or more dwellings or are separated from neighbouring dwellings by less than 1/2 a metre. Examples include semi-detached, row or terrace houses, townhouses, and villa units. Multi-storey townhouses or units are separately identified from single storey residential buildings.

### INQUIRIES

- for further information about the content of this information paper and the availability of related unpublished statistics, contact David Groube on Canberra (06) 252 5508 or any ABS State office.
- for information about other ABS statistics and services, please contact Information Services on Canberra (06) 252 6627, 252 5402, 252 6007 or any ABS State office.

- Flat or apartment
  - in a 1 or 2 storey block;
  - in a 3 storey block;
  - in a block of 4 or more storeys; or
  - attached to a house.

This category covers all dwellings in blocks of flats, units or apartments. These dwellings do not have their own private grounds and usually share a common entrance foyer or stair well. This category includes houses converted into flats, and flats attached to houses such as granny flats.

- *Caravan, tent, cabin, etc. in caravan park, houseboat, etc.*

This category includes all types of accommodation within a caravan park. It also includes all occupied water craft in marinas.

- *Caravan not in caravan park, houseboat, etc.*

This category includes all mobile units, on water or land, occupied on a permanent or semi-permanent basis by people (e.g. caravans, campervans, mobile houses, small boats, houseboats) that are not in caravan parks or marinas.

- *Improvised home, campers out*

This category covers all structures not elsewhere classified that are occupied by people on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. This category typically includes garages, sheds, tents, shacks, etc. These structures are only included in this category if they are not in a caravan park.

- *House or flat attached to a shop, office, etc.*

This category includes all houses or flats that are attached to a non-residential building. Examples of these dwellings are manses attached to a church, a flat or apartment over a shop, a caretaker's house or flat attached to a school, factory or storage facility.

#### Functional Classification of Buildings (BLD)

The *Functional Classification of Buildings* (BLD) is a classification developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to provide a standard classification of building jobs. The major use of the BLD classification is to classify buildings in the Building Approvals and Building Commencements collections and the Building Activity Survey. The National Accounts uses the major categories of this classification.

The BLD excludes dwellings in the DSC which are not buildings (such as caravans, houseboats and improvised dwellings).

The main feature of the BLD is that it classifies building jobs according to the main function of the building.

Where a building has more than one function according to this classification, the building is then classified according to its predominant function. In this manner the whole building is first classified according to whether it is a residential or non-residential building, and then according to type. Thus, for reasons of practicability, dwellings incorporated in hotels, factories, offices, etc., are included in the same category as the main building.

The BLD is set out as follows:

#### Residential buildings

##### Separate house

##### Other residential buildings

- Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse, etc. with:
  - 1 storey; or
  - 2 or more storeys.
- Flat or apartment
  - in a 1 or 2 storey block;
  - in a 3 storey block;
  - in a block of 4 or more storeys; or
  - attached to a house.
- Other residential buildings not coded to a specific category.

#### Non-residential buildings

- Hotels, motels, guesthouses and hostels.
- Shops.
- Factories.
- Offices.
- Other business premises.
- Education.
- Religion.
- Health.
- Entertainment and recreation.
- Miscellaneous, including Justice, Defence, Community Services, Mining and Agriculture.

Note that each of the above non-residential building categories includes any attached dwellings and associated group accommodation.

If you have any inquiries about this classification, please contact David Groube on (06) 252 5508.

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